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CDIED

23 September 1954


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Copy No. 80

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. ~~528~~ 41
NO CHANGE IN CLASS ☒
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 7 Jan 80 REVIEWER: 

25X1



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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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NSA review completed

State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A001700340001-5

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WESTERN EUROPE

4. Italian Foreign Ministry fears nine-power London conference will fail:

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A high official of the Italian Foreign Ministry expressed the view to the American embassy in Rome on 20 September that the London nine-power conference might fail, like the Brussels meeting, unless a firm basis for agreement is established in advance through adequate diplomatic soundings. The official felt the French proposals for an EDC alternative, which he described as "full of discrimination against Germany," vaguely drafted and alluding only indirectly to German admission into NATO, would only create confusion and dismay.

The Foreign Ministry continues to be suspicious of Mendes-France. It has expressed regret to the French embassy that he has apparently agreed to having his memoirs published in a newspaper which the Foreign Ministry describes as Communist.

Comment: Italian pessimism on the nine-power conference is generally shared by other Western European governments.

LATE ITEM

25X1 5. [redacted] army opposes Quwatli's return to power:

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[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] the bulk
of the Syrian army officer corps is now
opposed to the election of Shukri
Quwatli as president of Syria.

[redacted] 25X1
a quar-
ter of the present officer corps participated in the coup that
overthrew Quwatli in 1949 and fear the consequences of his return
to power. One half of the corps entered the Syrian military acad-
emy after Quwatli's exile and were appointed from families not
sympathetic to him.

25X1 Ambassador Caffery in Cairo reports
that [redacted] the real reason for
the Syrian prime minister's visit to Cairo was to convince Egypt
that his candidacy for the presidency has the backing of the
25X1 Syrian army. [redacted] army support for Ghazzi
is based less on enthusiasm for him than on fear of Quwatli.

[redacted] 25X1

This unexpectedly strong, last-minute
opposition to Quwatli could portend trouble on the occasion of
the parliamentary elections to be held on 24 September. It
seems more likely, however, that the army will allow the elec-
tions to be held but exert strong pressure to prevent the parlia-
ment elected from then choosing Quwatli as president.